



WILDLIFE TRADE TRAINING FACT SHEET FOR MILITARY STATIONED IN AFGHANISTAN OR IRAQ



OVERVIEW OF WILDLIFE TRADE IN THE MILITARY

- Military personnel and affiliates posted overseas have significant buying power that can influence local markets and drive the demand for wildlife products. Demand for wildlife and wildlife products poses one of the greatest threats to wild species, and often leads to local, regional, and potentially global extinctions.
- Wildlife products include all items made from wild animals. This includes, but is not limited to: fur coats, hats, blankets, and rugs; pelts, skins, hides, and leathered items; taxidermy or stuffed wildlife; antlers, horns, shells, ivory, bone, feathers, claws, or teeth; meat products or medicines derived from wildlife, and any other animal product trophy items.
- A survey of military personnel at Fort Drum, NY indicated that more than 40% had either purchased wildlife products while overseas or seen other members of the military purchase such items and less than 12% of Soldiers had heard of CITES or were familiar with prohibited wildlife products.
- Purchase and transport of any restricted wildlife products, especially without proper documentation, violates U.S. and International laws and agreements under the rubric of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
- Purchase, possession, sale, or transport of wildlife or wildlife products protected under CITES into the U.S. is a legal offense and punishable by heavy fines or imprisonment. **Military personnel are NOT exempt from these laws and can face stiff penalties (up to \$250,000 and 20 years in prison) for violating these laws.** Trade in illegal wildlife parts has been associated with trade in illegal arms and drugs. Increasing evidence suggests the profits of illegal wildlife trade support insurgencies and fuel corruption.

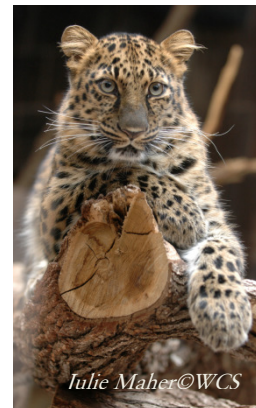


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Example of illegal items for sale in a popular tourist market in Kabul, Afghanistan. Similar markets can be found on base.

IMPORTANT U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL LAWS REGULATING WILDLIFE TRADE

- **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES)**
 - Regulates international commercial and non-commercial trade in animals and plants including parts.
 - Ensures that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.
 - Provides differing degrees of protection/regulation for over 30,000 plants or animals depending on the conservation status.
 - As of 2009, 175 member parties (countries) have ratified this agreement, the U.S. was one of the first.
- **U.S. Endangered Species Act**
 - Forbids federal agencies (including the DoD) from authorizing, funding, carrying out actions that may “jeopardize the continued existence of” endangered or threatened species.
 - Pertains to U.S. and international species (such as those found in Iraq and Afghanistan).
- **Lacey Act**
 - All US citizens must abide by all wildlife laws of country they are in as well as US laws when they are out of the country.
- **General Order I-B, DTR 4500.9-R and CCR 600-10.ⁱ**
 - Military personnel are further subject to Uniform Code Of Military Justice (UCMJ) for potential violations of these regulations.



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Furs and other products made from cats such as leopards are illegal to possess yet frequently seen in local markets.

WILDLIFE TRADE IN AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ

Iraq and Afghanistan are situated at the intersection of Africa, Asia, and Europe resulting in rich biodiversity representative of these regions. Many species are highly vulnerable to extinction.



Snow leopards are critically endangered and WCS Afghanistan estimates there may be less than 150 left in Afghanistan.

- In Iraq and Afghanistan, nearly 100 species of birds, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals receive the strictest protection under CITES.
- More than 30 years of unsettled political climate and war in the region prevents scientists from obtaining accurate biological information on most wildlife populations. Many are being poached and sold illegally in markets even though it is likely that the populations are quite low.
- Iraq and Afghanistan are home to 9 species of wild cats including sand cats, leopards, jungle cats, and caracals. Less than 150 critically endangered snow leopards are left in Afghanistan. While cat furs are some of the most popular items found in the markets, **ALL** cat products are illegal.
- Several laws, including a list of Protected Species, regulate wildlife trade in Afghanistan. As the national government is strengthened, enforcing existing laws will provide extra protection to wildlife.
- No Iraqi laws control wildlife trade in country; however military are still subject to U.S. law.

WHAT CAN MILITARY LEADERSHIP DO?

- **Warn military personnel about issues related to wildlife trade:** All wildlife products, regardless of status, must be declared to U.S. and military customs when returning to the U.S., otherwise it is considered smuggling. Carrying CITES-protected species across international borders is illegal, Soldiers who do so are at risk from legal penalties, as well as posing a threat to endangered species.
- **Direct those under your command to leave wildlife in the wild:** Avoid buying any wildlife products while stationed or deployed overseas, it is not worth the personal risk to military personnel or the devastating effects on populations of wild animals. Hunting native species for sport or meat should be strongly discouraged until adequate wildlife management is established in country.
- **Recommend alternatives:** Many products are for sale in local markets such as high quality hand-woven carpets and rugs, jewelry, pottery and other handcrafted items. The quality and workmanship of the wildlife products in places like Afghanistan and Iraq is quite poor; they are tanned incorrectly and do not hold up well in the snow or rain.



Alternative products are higher quality, created with finer workmanship, and legal.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Wildlife Conservation Society is a global conservation organization that has worked on wildlife trade issues for decades and played a major role drafting US legislation as well as the CITES agreement. In partnership with the Department of Defense Legacy Resources Management Program, WCS is working to train military personnel about the consequences of wildlife trade. Additional resources on illegal wildlife trade and CITES can be found at www.wcswildlifetrade.org or by contacting WCS staff at 518-891-8872 or Legacy staff at 703-604-1774.

ⁱ **General Order 1-B:** 2. Prohibited Activities, j. Adopting as pets or mascots, caring for, or feeding any type of domestic or wild animal.

Defense Travel Regulation 4500.9-R: 3. Agricultural Restrictions and Prohibitions; a(1) Animal and Poultry Products. United States Department of Agricultural Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS) restricts entry of animals, poultry, birds' eggs, wild bird feathers, poultry products and byproducts, and animal products and byproducts, to include meat extracts, secretions (including milk and cheese), untanned hides, untanned skins, wool, hair, bone, and horns. (There are no USDA APHIS restrictions on animal trophies that are full-finished for display. There are, however, US Fish and Wildlife Service restrictions and prohibitions on the importation of mounted birds and animals, including elephant ivory, elephant parts, and products thereof.)

USCENTCOM REG 600-10: Appendix E; USCENTCOM PERMITTED AND PROHIBITED ITEMS LIST

Prohibits the possession or shipment of Animals: Live, Dead or Parts. It also enforces restrictions inflicted by USDA, APHIS, and CITES.